

Bicycle Project Highlights: Off-Road

McDowell County

Old Fort / Old US 70: Point Lookout Trail

TIP Project E-3416

Long before the advent of interstate highways, US 70 was the primary east-west link across the country. Much of US 70 in North Carolina still remains open to vehicular traffic. However, one particularly scenic section overlooking the Royal Gorge in McDowell County, was closed to traffic many years ago when I-40 was built over Old Fort Mountain. For many years, local hikers and bicyclists used the abandoned roadbed as a trail and dreamed of the day when it could be officially opened to the public. The dream became a reality at a ceremony on October 30, 2008 when the recently completed trail was dedicated and named the Point Lookout Trail. Connecting Ridgecrest, just west of Black Mountain, to Old Fort, the 3.6-mile asphalt trail offers stunning mountain views, intimate landscapes, and a breathtaking downhill bicycle descent for all adventurers who travel there. The trail is expected to draw for visitors from throughout the region.

Special recognition goes to Claudia Nix, NC Bicycle Committee member for western NC, whose vision for the trail and many years of tireless effort to engage the community and forge partnerships finally paid off. Along with the efforts of Claudia Nix, the new trail was made possible through a partnership including NCDOT's Highway Division 13, the Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation, McDowell County, the town of Old Fort, the U.S. Forest Service, and local property owners, along with a variety of participants from the Ridgecrest and Black Mountain communities.

[Click here](#) to view a post card of Point Lookout from an earlier era.

[Click here](#) to view images prior to trail construction .



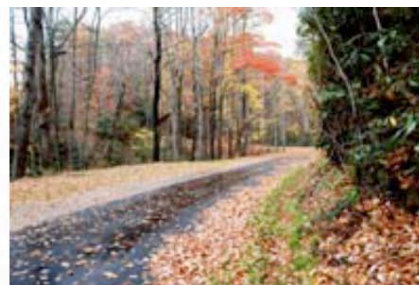
Point Lookout official ribbon-cutting ceremony



Point Lookout post card -[Click here](#) to enlarge



Picturesque view from trail



10-ft. asphalt trail with 2-ft. stone shoulders

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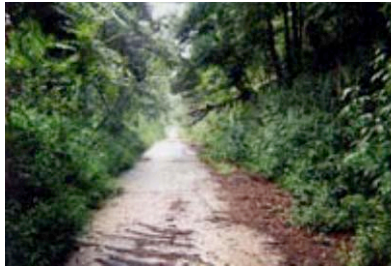


Point Lookout, on State Highway No.10, Western North Carolina, McDowell County
ca 1930 -1945

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Old US 70 in disrepair and over grown with vegetation